

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1           1. A distribution system including a distribution server  
2           for distributing a content via a network, and first and second  
3           receiving apparatuses for receiving the content via the  
4           network, the distribution system recording a copy of the  
5           content onto a recording medium and supplying the content to a  
6           playback apparatus,

7           the first receiving apparatus comprising:

8           a first receiving unit operable to receive via the network  
9           a data set including the content and control information  
10          controlling copying of the content onto the recording medium,  
11          and hold the received data set; and

12          a recording unit operable to generate authorization  
13          information showing whether moving the data set to another  
14          receiving apparatus is permitted, and record the content onto  
15          a distribution medium together with corresponding usage rule  
16          information including (1) the authorization information, and  
17          (2) the control information included in the data set; and

18          the second receiving apparatus comprising:

19          a second receiving unit operable to receive the data set  
20          from the distribution server via the network, and hold the

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21 received data set;
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22        a data set moving unit operable to read authorization  
23        information from the distribution medium, and (a) move the  
24        data set from the distribution medium to the inside of the  
25        second receiving apparatus, and (b) hold the data set, only  
26        when the read authorization information shows that moving the  
27        data set is permitted; and

28           a check-out unit operable to perform check-out when the  
29   data set is held by one of the second receiving unit and the  
30   data set moving unit, check-out performed based on the control  
31   information in the held data set by generating a copy of the  
32   content included in the held data set and recording the copy  
33   onto the recording medium, the copy recorded onto the  
34   recording medium being supplied to the playback apparatus.

1            2. -The distribution system of Claim 1, wherein:

2 the control information indicates a number of remaining  
3 check-outs;

4       the check-out unit includes a connecting unit operable to  
5       connect to a recording medium, and is operable to record a  
6       copy of the content included in the data set held by the data  
7       set moving unit onto the recording medium when a copy of the  
8       held content is not already recorded on the connected

recording medium, and the number of remaining check-outs shown by the control information held by one of the second receiving unit and the data set moving unit is at least one; and

the second receiving apparatus further comprises:

a check-in unit operable to delete, when a copy of the content is already recorded on the connected recording medium, the copy of the content recorded on the connected recording medium; and

an updating unit operable to update the control information by decrementing the number of remaining check-outs when a copy of the held content is newly recorded on the recording medium, and incrementing the number of remaining check-outs when the copy of the held content is deleted from the recording medium.

3. The distribution system of Claim 2, wherein:

the recording medium has an assigned unique identifier;

the check-out unit includes:

an allocation unit operable to allocate a unique identifier to the held content, the unique identifier being recorded onto the recording medium with the content when check-out is performed; and

a storage unit operable to read the unique identifier for the recording medium connected to the connecting unit from the

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10     recording medium, and store the read recording medium
11     identifier as a pair with the allocated content identifier,
12     and

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13 the check-in unit includes:

14           a read unit operable to read, when a copy of the content  
15       has already been recorded on a recording medium connected to  
16       the connecting unit, the unique identifiers for the connected  
17       recording medium and the content;

18 a comparing unit operable to compare the pair of  
19 identifiers read by the read unit with the pair of identifiers  
20 stored by the storage unit to determine whether the copy  
21 recorded on the connected recording medium was previously  
22 produced by the second recording apparatus;

23 a holding unit operable to read, when the copy was  
24 previously produced by the second recording apparatus, the  
25 copy from the connected recording medium, hold the read copy,  
26 and then delete the copy from the recording medium.

1           4. The distribution system of Claim 3, wherein, when the  
2       authorization information recorded on the distribution medium  
3       shows that moving the data set is not permitted, the reading  
4       unit is not operable to read the content and the usage rule  
5       information, and

the playback apparatus plays back the corresponding content directly from the distribution medium, when the authorization information indicates that moving the data set is not permitted.

5. A semiconductor memory card used as a distribution medium in a distribution system, the distribution system including a distribution server for distributing a content via a network, a first receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the network and recording the content onto a distribution medium, a second receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the distribution medium and recording a copy of the content onto a recording medium, and a playback apparatus for receiving the copy of the content via the recording medium and playing back the received content, the semiconductor memory card comprising:

a volume area, in which a content and usage rule information are recorded, the usage rule information including control information controlling copying of the recorded content onto the recording medium, and authorization information showing whether moving the control information and the content to the second receiving apparatus is permitted.

6. The semiconductor memory card of Claim 5, wherein the content includes encrypted audio data and a corresponding encryption key used to encrypt the encrypted audio data, and the volume area includes:

a user data area that stores the encrypted audio data and can be accessed by a device connected to the semiconductor memory card regardless of whether the authenticity of the device has been recognized, and

a protected area that stores the usage rule information and the encryption key and can only be accessed by a device connected to the semiconductor memory card when the authenticity of the device has been recognized.

7. The semiconductor card of Claim 6, wherein the authorization information shows that moving the control information and content is permitted by indicating a number of permitted moves.

8. A first receiving apparatus in a distribution system, the distribution system including a distribution server for distributing a content via a network, a first receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the network and recording the content onto a distribution medium, a second

6 receiving apparatus for receiving the content via the  
7 distribution medium and recording a copy of the content onto a  
8 recording medium, and a playback apparatus for receiving the  
9 copy of the content via the recording medium and playing back  
10 the received content, and the first receiving apparatus  
11 comprising:

12 a first receiving unit operable to receive via the network  
13 a data set including the content and control information  
14 controlling copying of the content onto the recording medium,  
15 and hold the received data set; and

16 a recording unit operable to generate authorization  
17 information showing whether moving the data set to another  
18 receiving apparatus is permitted, and record the content onto  
19 a distribution medium together with corresponding usage rule  
20 information including (1) the authorization information, and  
21 (2) the control information included in the data set.

1 9. A receiving apparatus for receiving contents from a  
2 distribution server via the network, as well as receiving  
3 contents via a distribution medium, and recording copies of a  
4 received content onto a recording medium,

5 the distribution medium storing contents and corresponding  
6 usage rule information, and

7 the usage rule information including control information  
8 controlling copying of a recorded content onto the recording  
9 medium, and authorization information showing whether moving a  
10 data set including a paired content and control information to  
11 the receiving apparatus is permitted, and

12 the receiving apparatus comprising:

13 a receiving unit operable to receive the data set from the  
14 distribution server via the network, and hold the received  
15 data set;

16 a data set moving unit operable to read authorization  
17 information from the distribution medium, and (a) move the  
18 data set from the distribution medium to the inside of the  
19 second receiving apparatus, and (b) hold the data set, only  
20 when the read authorization information shows that moving the  
21 data set is permitted; and

22 a check-out unit operable to perform check-out when the  
23 data set is held by one of the second receiving unit and the  
24 data set moving unit, check-out performed based on the control  
25 information in the held data set by generating a copy of the  
26 content included in the held data set and recording the copy  
27 onto the recording medium, the copy recorded onto the  
28 recording medium being supplied to the playback apparatus.





1 11. A recording medium recording a computer-readable  
2 program for having a computer perform processing as a  
3 receiving apparatus for receiving contents from a distribution  
4 server via the network, as well as receiving contents via a  
5 distribution medium, and recording copies of a received  
6 content onto a recording medium,

7 the distribution medium storing contents and corresponding  
8 usage rule information,

9 the usage rule information including control information  
10 controlling copying of a recorded content onto the recording  
11 medium, and authorization information showing whether moving a  
12 data set including a paired content and control information to  
13 the receiving apparatus is permitted, and

14 the receiving apparatus comprising:

15 a receiving step of receiving the data set from the  
16 distribution server via the network, and holding the received  
17 data set;

18 a data set moving step of reading authorization information  
19 from the distribution medium, and (a) moving the data set from  
20 the distribution medium to the inside of the second receiving  
21 apparatus, and (b) holding the data set, only when the read  
22 authorization information shows that moving the data set is  
23 permitted; and

24           a check-out step of performing check-out when the data set  
25   is held by one of the second receiving unit and the data set  
26   moving unit, check-out performed based on the control  
27   information in the held data set by generating a copy of the  
28   content included in the held data set and recording the copy  
29   onto the recording medium, the copy recorded onto the  
30   recording medium being supplied to the playback apparatus.

1 12. A receiving method applied by a first receiving  
2 apparatus in a distribution system, the distribution system  
3 including a distribution server for distributing a content via  
4 a network, a first receiving apparatus for receiving the  
5 content via the network and recording the content onto a  
6 distribution medium, a second receiving apparatus for  
7 receiving the content via the distribution medium and  
8 recording a copy of the content onto a recording medium, and a  
9 playback apparatus for receiving the copy of the content via  
10 the recording medium and playing back the received content,  
11 and the receiving method comprising:

12           a first receiving step of receiving via the network a data  
13    set including the content and control information controlling  
14    copying of the content onto the recording medium, and holding  
15    the received data set; and

16 a recording step of generating authorization information  
17 showing whether moving the data set to another receiving  
18 apparatus is permitted, and recording the content onto a  
19 distribution medium together with corresponding usage rule  
20 information including (1) the authorization information, and  
21 (2) the control information included in the data set.

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1 13. A receiving method for recording a computer-readable  
2 program for receiving contents from a distribution server via  
3 the network, as well as receiving contents via a distribution  
4 medium, and recording copies of a received content onto a  
5 recording medium,  
6 the distribution medium storing contents and corresponding  
7 usage rule information,  
8 the usage rule information including control information  
9 controlling copying of a recorded content onto the recording  
10 medium, and authorization information showing whether moving a  
11 data set including a paired content and control information to  
12 the receiving apparatus is permitted, and  
13 the receiving method comprising:  
14 a receiving step of receiving the data set from the  
15 distribution server via the network, and holding the received  
16 data set;

17 a data set moving step of reading authorization information  
18 from the distribution medium, and (a) moving the data set from  
19 the distribution medium to the inside of the second receiving  
20 apparatus, and (b) holding the data set, only when the read  
21 authorization information shows that moving the data set is  
22 permitted; and

23 a check-out step of performing check-out when the data set  
24 is held by one of the second receiving unit and the data set  
25 moving unit, check-out performed based on the control  
26 information in the held data set by generating a copy of the  
27 content included in the held data set and recording the copy  
28 onto the recording medium, the copy recorded onto the  
29 recording medium being supplied to the playback apparatus.